

PD POETRY

JULY 2019



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DUSK SONG

by William H.A. Moore

The garden is very quiet to-night,
The dusk has gone with the Evening Star,
And out on the bay a lone ship light
Makes a silver pathway over the bar
Where the sea sings low.

I follow the light with an earnest eye,
Creeping along to the thick far-away,
Until it fell in the depths of the deep, dark sky
With the haunting dream of the dusk of day
And its lovely glow.

Long nights, long nights and the whisperings of new ones,
Flame the line of the pathway down to the sea
With the halo of new dreams and the hallow of old ones,
And they bring magic light to my love reverie
And a lover's regret.

Tender sorrow for loss of a soft murmured word,
Tender measure of doubt in a faint, aching heart,
Tender listening for wind-songs in the tree heights heard
When you and I were of the dusks a part,
Are with me yet.

I pray for faith to the noble spirit of Space,
I sound the cosmic depths for the measure of glory
Which will bring to this earth the imperishable race
Of whom Beauty dreamed in the soul-toned story
The Prophets told.

Silence and love and deep wonder of stars
Dust-silver the heavens from west to east,
From south to north, and in a maze of bars
Invisible I wander far from the feast
As night grows old.

Half blind is my vision I know to the truth,
My ears are half deaf to the voice of the tear
That touches the silences as Autumn's ruth
Steals thru the dusks of each returning year
A goodly friend.

The Autumn, then Winter and wintertime's grief!

But the weight of the snow is the glistening gift
Which loving brings to the rose and its leaf,
For the days of the roses glow in the drift
And never end.

* * * * *

The moon has come. Wan and pallid is she.
The spell of half memories, the touch of half tears,
And the wounds of worn passions she brings to me
With all the tremor of the far-off years
And their mad wrong.

Yet the garden is very quiet to-night,
The dusk has long gone with the Evening Star,
And out on the bay the moon's wan light
Lays a silver pathway beyond the bar,
Dear heart, pale and long.

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Book of American Negro Poetry*
by Edited by James Weldon Johnson

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN WITH A BAD HEART

by William Carlos Williams

Have I seen her?
Only through the window
across the street.

If I go meeting her
on the corner
some damned fool
will go blabbing it
to the old man and
she'll get hell.
He's a queer old bastard!
Every time he sees me
you'd think
I wanted to kill him.
But I figure it out
it's best to let things
stay as they are--
for a while at least.

It's hard
giving up the thing
you want most
in the world, but with this
damned pump of mine
liable to give out ...

She's a good kid
and I'd hate to hurt her
but if she can get over it--

it'd be the best thing.

CREPUSCULE

by E. Estlin Cummings

I will wade out
till my thighs are steeped in burn-
ing flowers
I will take the sun in my mouth
and leap into the ripe air
Alive
with closed eyes
to dash against darkness
in the sleeping curves of my
body
Shall enter fingers of smooth mastery
with chasteness of sea-girls
Will I complete the mystery
of my flesh
I will rise
After a thousand years
lipping
flowers
And set my teeth in the silver of the moon

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Eight Harvard Poets*, by Various

SATIRICAL LETRILLIAS.--III.

By Manuel Breton De Los Herreros

Such is, dear girl, my tenderness,
Naught can its equal be!
If thou a dowry didst possess
The charms to rival of thy face,
I would marry thee.

Thou wert my bliss, my star, my all!
So kind and fair to see;
And me thy consort to instal,
At once for witness Heaven I call,
I would marry thee.

Thou dost adore me? yes, and I,
Thy love so raptures me,
If thou wouldst not so anxious try
To know my pay, and what I buy,
I would marry thee.

If thou wert not so always coy,
Ne'er listening to my plea,
But when I, fool! my cash employ
To bring thee sweets, or some fine toy,
I would marry thee.

If thou must not instructions wait,
As may mamma agree,
To write or speak to me, or state
When thou wilt meet me at the gate,
I would marry thee.

If 'twere not when to dine, the most
Thy meagre soup bouillie
Thou givest, as many airs thou show'st,
As Roderic at the hanging-post,
I would marry thee.

If for my punishment instead
Of ease and quiet, we
Might not three hungry brothers dread,
And mother too, to keep when wed,
I would marry thee.

If 'twere not when these plagues combine

With thy tears flowing free,
The virtues of a heavenly sign
I see must solace me, not thine,
I would marry thee.

Go, get another in thy chain,
And Heaven for you decree
A thousand joys, for me 'tis vain;
I know thee cheat, and tell thee plain,
I will not marry thee.

Project Gutenberg's *Modern Poets and Poetry of Spain*, by James Kennedy

THE BEAN-STALK

by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Ho, Giant! This is I!
I have built me a bean-stalk into your sky!
La,--but it's lovely, up so high!

This is how I came,--I put
There my knee, here my foot,
Up and up, from shoot to shoot--
And the blessed bean-stalk thinning
Like the mischief all the time,
Till it took me rocking, spinning,
In a dizzy, sunny circle,
Making angles with the root,
Far and out above the cackle
Of the city I was born in,
Till the little dirty city
In the light so sheer and sunny
Shone as dazzling bright and pretty
As the money that you find
In a dream of finding money--
What a wind! What a morning!--

Till the tiny, shiny city,
When I shot a glance below,
Shaken with a giddy laughter,
Sick and blissfully afraid,
Was a dew-drop on a blade,
And a pair of moments after
Was the whirling guess I made,--
And the wind was like a whip
Cracking past my icy ears,
And my hair stood out behind,
And my eyes were full of tears,
Wide-open and cold,
More tears than they could hold,
The wind was blowing so,
And my teeth were in a row,
Dry and grinning,
And I felt my foot slip,
And I scratched the wind and whined,
And I clutched the stalk and jabbered,
With my eyes shut blind,--
What a wind! What a wind!

Your broad sky, Giant,

Is the shelf of a cupboard;
I make bean-stalks, I'm
A builder, like yourself,
But bean-stalks is my trade,
I couldn't make a shelf,
Don't know how they're made,
Now, a bean-stalk is more pliant--
La, what a climb!

BIRCHES

by Robert Frost

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-coloured
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal
shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the
load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are
bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground,
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm,
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.

And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

WAKING

by John Freeman

Lying beneath a hundred seas of sleep
With all those heavy waves flowing over me,
And I unconscious of the rolling night
Until, slowly, from deep to lesser deep
Risen, I felt the wandering seas no longer cover me
But only air and light ...

It was a sleep
So dark and so bewilderingly deep
That only death's were deeper or completer,
And none when I awoke stranger or sweeter.
Awake, the strangeness still hung over me
As I with far-strayed senses stared at the light.

I--and who was I?
Saw--oh, with what unaccustomed eye!
The room was strange and everything strange
Like a strange room entered by wild moonlight;
And yet familiar as the light swept over me
And I rose from the night.

Strange--yet stranger I.
And as one climbs from water up to land
Fumbling for weedy steps with foot and hand,
So I for yesterdays whereon to climb
To this remote and new-struck isle of time.
But I found not myself nor yesterday--

Until, slowly, from deep to lesser deep
Risen, I felt the seas no longer over me
But only air and light.
Yes, like one clutching at a ring I heard
The household noises as they stirred,
And holding fast I wondered, What were they?

I felt a strange hand lying at my side,
Limp and cool. I touched it and knew it mine.
A murmur, and I remembered how the wind died
In the near aspens. Then
Strange things were no more strange.
I travelled among common thoughts again;

And felt the new-forged links of that strong chain

That binds me to myself, and this to-day
To yesterday. I heard it rattling near
With a no more astonished ear.
And I had lost the strangeness of that sleep,
No more the long night rolled its great seas over me.

--O, too anxious I!
For in this press of things familiar
I have lost all that clung
Round me awaking of strangeness and such sweetness.
Nothing now is strange
Except the man that woke and then was I.

JEAN

by Robert Burns

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly like the West,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And mony a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs,
By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonnie bird that sings
But minds me o' my Jean.

O blaw ye westlin winds, blaw saft
Amang the leafy trees;
Wi' balmy gale, frae hill and dale
Bring hame the laden bees;
And bring the lassie back to me
That's aye sae neat and clean;
Ae smile o' her wad banish care,
Sae charming is my Jean.

What sighs and vows amang the knowes
Hae pass'd atween us twa!
How fond to meet, how wae to part
That night she gaed awa!
The Powers aboon can only ken
To whom the heart is seen,
That nane can be sae dear to me
As my sweet lovely Jean!

AN ENGLISH WOOD

by Robert von Ranke Graves

This valley wood is hedged
With the set shape of things.
Here sorrows come not edged,
Here are no harpies fledged,
No roc has clapped his wings,
No gryphons wave their stings;
Here, poised in quietude
Calm elementals brood
On the set shape of things,
They fend away alarms
From this green wood.
Here nothing is that harms,
No bull with lungs of brass,
No toothed or spiny grass,
No tree whose clutching arms
Drink blood when travellers pass,
No mount of Glass.
No bardic tongues unfold
Satires or charms.
Only the lawns are soft,
The tree-stems, grave and old.
Slow branches sway aloft,
The evening air comes cold,
The sunset scatters gold.
Small grasses toss and bend,
Small pathways idly tend
Towards no certain end.

JAGUAR

by Lola Ridge

Nasal intonations of light
and clicking tongues...
publicity of windows
stoning me with pent-up cries...
smells of abattoirs...
smells of long-dead meat.

Some day-end--
while the sand is yet cozy as a blanket
off the warm body of a squaw,
and the jaguars are out to kill...
with a blue-black night coming on
and a painted cloud
stalking the first star--
I shall go alone into the Silence...
the coiled Silence...
where a cry can run only a little way
and waver and dwindle
and be lost.

And there...
where tiny antlers clinch and strain
as life grapples in a million avid points,
and threshing things
strike and die,
letting their hate live on
in the spreading purple of a wound...
I too
will make covert of a crevice in the night,
and turn and watch...
nose at the cleft's edge.

TO A SKYLARK

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingèd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymenæal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance

Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

THE CLOSED DOOR

by Dorothea Mackellar

As we crossed Alcántara
With the Tagus falling,
I was 'ware there came a voice
At my shoulder calling.
As we climbed the steep red path--
Red as smouldering ember--
"You, you know this well," it said,
"_Do you not remember?_"

Up the narrow cobbled streets
Still it followed after,
Whispering deeds that we had shared
With a fierce low laughter.
"Here you stabbed him and he fell
With his sword a-clatter--
Life for life--you paid your debt--
That was no great matter."

Through the Gate that Wamba built
Still the voice pursuing
Softly called, "We know it all,
All that you are doing.
Every stone you're treading now
You have known aforetime,
You have seen these grim red walls
In the stress of wartime.

"You remember? Down this lane
You would often swagger
With your comrades of the mask,
Cloak and sword and dagger.
At that window high she stood,
Some dear dead Dolores....
You've forgotten--and so soon?
--There are other stories...."

By the white Church of the Kings,
By the proud red towers,
Thronging round about me came
Ghosts of long-dead hours;
Ghosts of many a blazing June,
Many a keen December--
"Thus and thus and thus we did.
Do you not remember?"

TOLEDO, SPAIN.

Project Gutenberg's *The Witch-Maid and other verses*

SHALL I COMPLAIN?

by Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall

Shall I complain because the rain
Has spoiled the flowers?
Shall I despair because the air
Is damp with showers?

Shall I forget, that even yet
New buds will spring?
And shall I sigh while still there's by
One bird to sing?

Project Gutenberg's *'Twixt Earth and Stars*

THE PRAIRIES

by William Cullen Bryant

These are the gardens of the Desert, these
The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,
For which the speech of England has no name—
The Prairies. I behold them for the first,
And my heart swells, while the dilated sight
Takes in the encircling vastness. Lo! they stretch
In airy undulations, far away,
As if the ocean, in his gentlest swell,
Stood still, with all his rounded billows fixed,
And motionless for ever.—Motionless?—
No—they are all unchained again. The clouds
Sweep over with their shadows, and, beneath,
The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye;
Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase
The sunny ridges. Breezes of the South!
Who toss the golden and the flame-like flowers,
And pass the prairie-hawk that, poised on high,
Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not—ye have played
Among the palms of Mexico and vines
Of Texas, and have crisped the limpid brooks
That from the fountains of Sonora glide
Into the calm Pacific—have ye fanned
A nobler or a lovelier scene than this?
Man hath no part in all this glorious work:
The hand that built the firmament hath heaved
And smoothed these verdant swells, and sown their slopes
With herbage, planted them with island groves,
And hedged them round with forests. Fitting floor
For this magnificent temple of the sky—
With flowers whose glory and whose multitude
Rival the constellations! The great heavens
Seem to stoop down upon the scene in love,—
A nearer vault, and of a tenderer blue,
Than that which bends above the eastern hills.

As o'er the verdant waste I guide my steed,
Among the high rank grass that sweeps his sides
The hollow beating of his footstep seems
A sacrilegious sound. I think of those
Upon whose rest he tramples. Are they here—
The dead of other days?—and did the dust
Of these fair solitudes once stir with life
And burn with passion? Let the mighty mounds

That overlook the rivers, or that rise
In the dim forest crowded with old oaks,
Answer. A race, that long has passed away,
Built them;—a disciplined and populous race
Heaped, with long toil, the earth, while yet the Greek
Was hewing the Pentelicus to forms
Of symmetry, and rearing on its rock
The glittering Parthenon. These ample fields
Nourished their harvests, here their herds were fed,
When haply by their stalls the bison lowed,
And bowed his maned shoulder to the yoke.
All day this desert murmured with their toils,
Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked, and wooed
In a forgotten language, and old tunes,
From instruments of unremembered form,
Gave the soft winds a voice. The red man came—
The roaming hunter tribes, warlike and fierce,
And the mound-builders vanished from the earth.
The solitude of centuries untold
Has settled where they dwelt. The prairie-wolf
Hunts in their meadows, and his fresh-dug den
Yawns by my path. The gopher mines the ground
Where stood their swarming cities. All is gone—
All—save the piles of earth that hold their bones—
The platforms where they worshipped unknown gods—
The barriers which they builded from the soil
To keep the foe at bay—till o'er the walls
The wild beleaguers broke, and, one by one,
The strongholds of the plain were forced, and heaped
With corpses. The brown vultures of the wood
Flocked to those vast uncovered sepulchres,
And sat, unscared and silent, at their feast.
Haply some solitary fugitive,
Lurking in marsh and forest, till the sense
Of desolation and of fear became
Bitterer than death, yielded himself to die.
Man's better nature triumphed then. Kind words
Welcomed and soothed him; the rude conquerors
Seated the captive with their chiefs; he chose
A bride among their maidens, and at length
Seemed to forget,—yet ne'er forgot,—the wife
Of his first love, and her sweet little ones,
Butchered, amid their shrieks, with all his race.

Thus change the forms of being. Thus arise
Races of living things, glorious in strength,
And perish, as the quickening breath of God
Fills them, or is withdrawn. The red man, too,
Has left the blooming wilds he ranged so long,

And, nearer to the Rocky Mountains, sought
A wilder hunting-ground. The beaver builds
No longer by these streams, but far away,
On waters whose blue surface ne'er gave back
The white man's face—among Missouri's springs,
And pools whose issues swell the Oregon,
He rears his little Venice. In these plains
The bison feeds no more. Twice twenty leagues
Beyond remotest smoke of hunter's camp,
Roams the majestic brute, in herds that shake
The earth with thundering steps—yet here I meet
His ancient footprints stamped beside the pool.

Still this great solitude is quick with life.
Myriads of insects, gaudy as the flowers
They flutter over, gentle quadrupeds,
And birds, that scarce have learned the fear of man,
Are here, and sliding reptiles of the ground,
Startlingly beautiful. The graceful deer
Bounds to the wood at my approach. The bee,
A more adventurous colonist than man,
With whom he came across the eastern deep,
Fills the savannas with his murmurings,
And hides his sweets, as in the golden age,
Within the hollow oak. I listen long
To his domestic hum, and think I hear
The sound of that advancing multitude
Which soon shall fill these deserts. From the ground
Comes up the laugh of children, the soft voice
Of maidens, and the sweet and solemn hymn
Of Sabbath worshippers. The low of herds
Blends with the rustling of the heavy grain
Over the dark-brown furrows. All at once
A fresher wind sweeps by, and breaks my dream,
And I am in the wilderness alone.

RETROSPECT

by Rupert Brooke

In your arms was still delight,
Quiet as a street at night;
And thoughts of you, I do remember,
Were green leaves in a darkened chamber,
Were dark clouds in a moonless sky.
Love, in you, went passing by,
Penetrative, remote, and rare,
Like a bird in the wide air,
And, as the bird, it left no trace
In the heaven of your face.
In your stupidity I found
The sweet hush after a sweet sound.
All about you was the light
That dims the greying end of night;
Desire was the unrisen sun,
Joy the day not yet begun,
With tree whispering to tree,
Without wind, quietly.
Wisdom slept within your hair,
And Long-Suffering was there,
And, in the flowing of your dress,
Undiscerning Tenderness.
And when you thought, it seemed to me,
Infinitely, and like a sea,
About the slight world you had known
Your vast unconsciousness was thrown. . . .

O haven without wave or tide!
Silence, in which all songs have died!
Holy book, where hearts are still!
And home at length under the hill!
O mother quiet, breasts of peace,
Where love itself would faint and cease!
O infinite deep I never knew,
I would come back, come back to you,
Find you, as a pool unstirred,
Kneel down by you, and never a word,
Lay my head, and nothing said,
In your hands, ungarlanded;
And a long watch you would keep;
And I should sleep, and I should sleep!

Mataiea, January 1914
Project Gutenberg's *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*

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